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Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

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Implementation Review Group
First resumed ninth session
Vienna, 3–5 September 2018

Report of the Implementation Review Group on its first resumed ninth session, held in Vienna from 3 to 5 September 2018

I. Introduction

1. The Implementation Review Group was established by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in its resolution 3/1, entitled "Review mechanism", as an open-ended intergovernmental group of States parties to operate under its authority and report to it. The Group is to have an overview of the review process in order to identify challenges and good practices and to consider technical assistance requirements in order to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

II. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

2. The Implementation Review Group held its first resumed ninth session in Vienna from 3 to 5 September 2018.

3. The Group held five meetings, which were chaired by Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain).

4. The representative of the European Union, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, noted that corruption was a threat to democracy, good governance and fair competition and that it undermined the rule of law and the fundamental values on which societies were based. He referred to the need for stronger judicial systems that would enforce laws and work towards a more peaceful and just society, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Sustainable Development Goal 16. Moreover, the representative noted that transparency, accountability and the fight against corruption were key principles guiding action taken by the European Union. As an example of such action he cited the reinforcement of the rules of the European Union against money-laundering to better address beneficial ownership and due diligence. The representative reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to the Implementation Review Mechanism. He emphasized the importance of cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other relevant secretariats, such as that of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Group of States

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III. Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

11. A representative of the secretariat provided an update on the progress made in the country reviews of the first and second review cycles. She highlighted that, at the time of reporting, 179 States parties under review in the first cycle had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 171 direct dialogues (158 country visits and 13 joint meetings) had taken place, and 164 executive summaries had been finalized. The finalization of several other executive summaries was imminent. The representative of the secretariat also informed the Group about the languages used in the country reviews conducted during the first cycle and pointed out that not many meaningful conclusions could be drawn from that information in view of several factors, such as the random nature of the drawing of lots, the possible results of efforts to avoid reviews conducted in more than one language, the sizes of the various regional groups and the number of languages used by the members of those groups.

12. The representative further informed the Group that, under the second review cycle, all 77 States parties under review in the first and second years had nominated their focal points. Also during the first two years of the second cycle, 58 States had submitted responses to the self-assessment checklist and 33 direct dialogues (31 country visits and 2 joint meetings) had taken place, while several other country visits were at various stages of planning. At the time of reporting, 11 executive summaries had been finalized and several additional executive summaries were being completed. Owing to the organization of training events early in the review cycle, the majority of States parties under review in the second and third years of the second cycle had nominated their focal points well before the start of their reviews, and therefore had the opportunity to undertake the early preparation of their self-assessment checklists.

13. At the Group's ninth session, held in June 2018, the secretariat had highlighted that the number of reviews finalized under the second cycle remained insufficient to allow for a more in-depth analysis. The representative of the secretariat underscored that the delays, which had been encountered primarily in the second year of the second review cycle, remained a source of concern. Since the Group's ninth regular session, only five new self-assessment checklists had been received and two new executive summaries had been published. The secretariat once again urged States parties to make greater efforts to adhere to the timelines set forth in the terms of reference of the Mechanism.

14. During the ensuing debate, several speakers expressed their commitment to the Mechanism and noted their countries' continued efforts to move forward with their reviews. Several speakers highlighted the role of the Mechanism in assisting States in identifying shortcomings and good practices and in enhancing international cooperation. Some speakers noted that, although filling out the self-assessment checklist was challenging and time-consuming, which contributed to the delays in the reviews, such issues could be resolved within the existing framework. Reference was made to the level of government at which the completed self-assessment checklists were being validated, including the ministerial and presidential levels. Some speakers expressed the view that validation of the information at the highest possible level could be considered a good practice, as it showed a Government's commitment to the full implementation of the Convention and the proper functioning of the Mechanism. Many speakers expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat to advance the review process and facilitate the finalization of country review reports.

15. The uniqueness of the Convention and of the Implementation Review Mechanism was highlighted. The Mechanism had been established as an important tool to facilitate the Convention's effective implementation. A number of speakers reiterated the importance of the guiding principles of the Mechanism to building trust and confidence. They noted, in particular, that the Mechanism's intergovernmental

nature, as well as its integrity, impartiality and technical nature were crucial to its success. In that regard, one speaker recalled the importance of adhering to the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States parties.

16. Speakers emphasized that the Mechanism was a process of peer review and that this aspect of the process was equally critical to the its continued success. They urged States to ensure that the experts nominated to conduct the reviews had relevant expertise. Most speakers noted that the roles their States played as both reviewing parties and parties under review were mutually reinforcing. One speaker stressed that it was the task of the reviewing States parties to evaluate compliance and reminded the States parties under review to provide timely, accurate and clear information so that their reviews accurately captured accomplishments and technical assistance needs. A number of speakers also encouraged States to finalize and/or publish their reports and self-assessment checklist in full on the UNODC website.

17. Several speakers explained that their States had established special national follow-up committees and inter-institutional coordination networks to monitor and ensure the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations stemming from their reviews. One speaker indicated that, although his country's review was still in its final stages, a public debate had already been scheduled to share the findings with the public and national institutions. Another speaker suggested holding a panel discussion specifically about the technical assistance sought or provided to follow up on the recommendations. Another speaker encouraged States parties to continue implementing recommendations from their reviews conducted in the first cycle and noted that States that did so might require technical assistance.

18. Several speakers noted the importance of the Convention as a legal basis for seeking international cooperation. One speaker explained that his country viewed the second cycle of the Mechanism as paving the way for enhanced asset recovery through international cooperation and technical assistance. Several regional anti-corruption events were mentioned as examples of joint anti-corruption efforts, including the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network, which had met in Baghdad on 30 June 2018; the African anti-corruption year proclaimed by the African Union and the meeting of the African Union held in Nouakchott in June 2018; and the newly established European Union integrity network. A number of speakers noted the importance of enhancing synergies among the various review mechanisms. One speaker explained that her country had encouraged the Mechanism for Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption of the Organization of American States to enhance synergies with other anti-corruption review mechanisms. Some speakers highlighted the importance of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 16, in the context of anti-corruption efforts.

19. One speaker recommended that the secretariat continue the practice of allotting a full day to the civil society briefing held on the margins of the meetings of the Group in line with resolution 4/6 of the Conference of the States Parties. The same speaker expressed the view that allowing civil society organizations to participate in the meetings of the Group during the consideration of its agenda item on technical assistance could be a positive step to building confidence and would allow States parties to benefit from the expertise of those organizations providing on-the-ground assistance.

20. One speaker suggested that, in the future, in order to add focus to the substantive deliberations of the Group, the secretariat could send States parties substantive questions, or seek their comments or proposals on particular subjects.

21. The Secretary of the Conference acknowledged with gratitude the appreciation that States had expressed for the work undertaken by the secretariat in support of the Implementation Review Mechanism. He noted that the Group was working towards examining the performance of the Mechanism in more detail, which required more information. To date, the pace had largely been set by the reviews conducted in the first cycle. He also noted that the Mechanism's foundational documents defined the

objectives that needed to be achieved and that an initial analysis of the Mechanism's performance needed to take those objectives into account. He acknowledged that the amount of information currently available under the second-cycle country reviews was limited due to the complexity and wider scope of chapters II and V of the Convention. Furthermore, the Secretary noted that the calls on States parties under review and reviewing States parties to adhere to the indicative timelines contained in the terms of reference had not yielded sufficient results and stressed the need to adhere to those indicative timelines.

IV. Review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

A. Drawing of lots

22. In the first review cycle, the Group drew lots to designate the reviewing States for Chad, which had acceded to the Convention after the drawing of lots at the ninth session of the Group, held from 4 to 6 June 2018, and Equatorial Guinea, for which the Convention had entered into force after the drawing of lots conducted at the ninth session of the Group. The Congo and Niue were drawn as reviewing States for Chad. Guinea-Bissau and Chad were drawn as reviewing States for Equatorial Guinea. In the second review cycle, Dominica was drawn as the other reviewer for Saint Lucia. Provisional redraws were carried out in cases where reviewing States could defer acting as reviewers in accordance with the terms of reference of the Mechanism and could not be reached for immediate confirmation of their readiness to conduct the reviews.[1]

B. Second cycle: trends in reviews

23. A representative of the secretariat briefed the Group on the latest trends in the thematic findings emerging from the completed reviews of the second cycle. The briefing was based on the thematic reports on the implementation of chapters II and V of the Convention prepared for the ninth session of the Group (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/6 and CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/5, respectively), and took into account country reviews completed since the drafting of those reports. In accordance with the thematic focus of the session, the briefing centred around trends and findings relating to chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention.

24. The secretariat informed the Group that five additional executive summaries had been finalized since the ninth session of the Group, held in June 2018, bringing the overall number of completed reviews to 11. Despite almost doubling the number of completed reviews, the overall trends had remained consistent, although some new nuances had emerged. In terms of the number of recommendations issued, challenges were most often encountered with respect to the public sector (article 7 of the Convention), codes of conduct for public officials (article 8) and the private sector (article 12). The speaker highlighted that, compared with the previous update, challenges were more frequently identified in respect of codes of conduct for public officials (article 8) than of public procurement and the management of public finances (article 9). Nonetheless, the number of recommendations issued under article 9 continued to be high. The same was true for article 14, which governed measures to prevent money-laundering. The highest number of good practices had been identified in the participation of society in anti-corruption efforts (article 13). Many country reviews highlighted the important role played by civil society in governmental decision-making processes. Article 5 on preventive anti-corruption policies and

[1] The outcome of the drawing of lots held during the first resumed ninth session of the Group is contained in the conference room paper entitled "Country pairings for the first and second cycles of the Implementation Review Mechanism" (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.9/Rev.1), which is available at the UNODC website

practices was another article for which a high number of good practices had been identified, such as strong involvement of society in the establishment of national strategies and policies, and the broad range of activities held and measures taken by States parties to prevent corruption.

25. With regard to the first review cycle, the speaker gave the Group an update on the ongoing work to develop a set of non-binding recommendations and conclusions based on lessons learned regarding the implementation of chapters III and IV of the Convention. The secretariat would again circulate the draft set of non-binding conclusions and recommendations for written comments after the session. The draft set would also be made available to the Group for further discussion at its second resumed session, in November, when criminalization, law enforcement and international cooperation would be on the agenda. The eventual objective was submission of the draft set of non-binding recommendations and conclusions to the Conference in accordance with paragraph 11 of resolution 6/1.

26. In the ensuing discussion, speakers expressed appreciation for the thematic analysis of the outcome of the second review cycle and encouraged the secretariat to continue to update the reports as more country reviews were completed. Speakers recognized that the thematic reports helped States to prepare or benchmark reviews and to assess progress, taking into account experiences, good practices, challenges and lessons learned by other States. Some speakers expressed appreciation for the value of the good practices highlighted in the country review reports and encouraged the secretariat to compile and make available to the Group at its future sessions meaningful and more detailed information on good practices identified in the second review cycle. It was also underscored that the thematic reports were useful with regard to the ongoing initiatives on synergies between mechanisms. One speaker noted that, in review outcome documents, the distinction between recommendations for mandatory and non-mandatory provisions of the Convention could be made clearer and encouraged reviewers to take that into account when formulating recommendations. Other speakers emphasized the comprehensiveness of all recommendations.

27. Regarding preventive measures, several speakers underscored the importance of political will, which in various countries had been translated into a range of legislative, institutional and policy-related measures and initiatives (including, in some cases, through provisions in national constitutions). These changes had been achieved both in preparation for and following the reviews. For example, a number of speakers reported on the development of national anti-corruption policies and strategies that had been prepared through extensive consultations with public and non-public stakeholders across a wide range of sectors. The benefits of awareness-raising and dissemination of such information were highlighted. One speaker noted the importance of developing an evidence base relating to corruption and reported on risk assessments undertaken in his country to reduce its vulnerability to corruption.

28. Speakers also reported on legislative, regulatory and administrative mechanisms to detect and prevent conflicts of interest, such as financial disclosure or the declaration of assets and gifts. Such mechanisms had proven useful tools in the detection and prosecution of corruption and illicit enrichment, and had been accompanied by programmes of ethics education, training and guidance aimed at establishing a culture of integrity. Speakers further reported on measures undertaken to prevent money-laundering and confiscate the proceeds of corruption, such as beneficial ownership transparency and steps to create beneficial ownership registers.

29. Turning to other areas under chapter II, speakers highlighted reforms in public procurement, such as e-procurement initiatives to make the public tendering process more efficient and transparent. Several speakers also highlighted reforms pertaining to access to information, information technology and open data, including the development of new laws coupled with procedures and administrative arrangements such as monitoring mechanisms, intergovernmental coordination arrangements and action plans to implement the Open Government Partnership. The overall importance

of inter-agency coordination in the prevention of corruption was highlighted, and several speakers reported on institutional arrangements in that regard.

30. Speakers also highlighted important developments in the areas of reporting mechanisms, witness and whistle-blower protection, codes of ethics and public sector reform programmes, for example programmes to enhance the delivery of public services and measures to strengthen the recruitment and training of public officials, in particular in areas considered vulnerable to corruption.

31. A number of speakers highlighted that non-governmental stakeholders, notably civil society, the private sector, academia and the media, played an important role in the prevention of corruption, national efforts to enhance integrity, accountability and transparency, and that they made valuable contributions to country reviews, including country visits. Speakers further made mention of other international efforts to support effective implementation of chapter II, such as the Group of 20 Anti-Corruption Working Group. Cooperation agreements to enhance regional and international cooperation to prevent and counter corruption were also referred to.

32. Several delegations emphasized that both the Implementation Review Mechanism and the country visits were intergovernmental in nature and must remain so.

33. Several speakers described measures to create or strengthen specialized bodies to prevent and counter corruption, and to undertake efforts to strengthen institutional mechanisms. For example, an expert group meeting had been held in Colombo in July 2018 at which international experts had discussed ways to promote and strengthen anti-corruption authorities and develop commentary on the Jakarta Statement on Principles for Anti-Corruption Agencies. Speakers noted that these measures had led to a greater number of investigations being launched and prosecutions being brought before the courts. Some speakers also reported that special courts had been established to hear cases involving corruption and economic crime. This had led to faster adjudication.

34. Some speakers highlighted measures taken to prevent corruption in the private sector. Based on the number of recommendations issued under article 12 of the Convention and the absence of any identified good practices to date, private sector corruption had emerged as a priority area for the second cycle. One speaker suggested that this topic could be included in the future workplan of the Working Group on Prevention. One speaker highlighted the work that had been done to promote public-private partnerships under an integrity project involving several States. The project focused, in particular, on the exchange of information in the public sector and the development of a communications platform. Another speaker highlighted the need for more data on how States had implemented article 12 so that the exchange of good practices could continue.

35. One speaker reported on plans for a public discussion to follow up on the results of the second review cycle with a view to encouraging the exchange of information, identifying reform areas and ensuring that the recommendations were implemented promptly.

36. Speakers welcomed the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices during the country reviews and in the context of the subsidiary bodies established by the Conference.

V. Technical assistance

37. In its resolution 6/1, the Conference requested the Secretariat to structure the provisional agendas of the Implementation Review Group and of other subsidiary bodies established by the Conference in such a way as to avoid the duplication of discussions, while respecting their mandates. Therefore, in line with the thematic focus of the first resumed ninth session of the Implementation Review Group, a representative of the secretariat presented an oral briefing on both the technical

assistance needs identified in the country reviews and the technical assistance provided by UNODC for the implementation of chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention. Reference was also made to the background paper prepared by the Secretariat for the meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption, to be held in Vienna from 5 to 7 September, entitled "Status of implementation of Conference resolutions 7/5, entitled 'Promoting preventive measures against corruption' and 7/6, entitled 'Follow-up to the Marrakech declaration on the prevention of corruption'" (CAC/COSP/WG.4/2018/4).

38. The representative of the secretariat explained that of the 11 finalized country reviews conducted in the second cycle, 7 identified technical assistance needs. Of the needs identified, nearly two thirds related to chapter II (Preventive measures) and one third to chapter V (Asset recovery). Some trends echoed those already identified during the first review cycle, such as the need for legislative assistance and for institution- and capacity-building. New trends included the need to enhance outreach and reinforce contacts with external stakeholders, in particular the general public, as a reflection of the overall goal to include the whole of society in fighting and preventing corruption.

39. The representative went on to outline a number of steps UNODC had taken in relation to technical assistance in support of the Convention, including the launch of the Global Judicial Integrity Network in April 2018. In 15 States, UNODC had continued to support the drafting of anti-corruption legislation and processes to prepare for accession to the Convention. The increasing number of requests for support in drafting national anti-corruption strategies had led the Secretariat to hold a new training event for focal points and governmental experts in Moscow and in Panama in April 2018 as part of its training programme on the Implementation Review Mechanism.

40. The Group held two panel discussions during its consideration of the item on technical assistance.

41. During the first panel discussion, the panellists from Belgium and Guinea explained that, during a focal point training held in Vienna, they had noted the complementarity in Belgium's experiences in implementing the Convention and Guinea's technical assistance needs. The two States agreed to address some of Guinea's assistance needs in relation to asset management by organizing a study tour in Belgium. The panellist from Guinea explained that the visit had been very productive and that his country's delegation had met with a wide range of counterparts. He further outlined the bilateral assistance agreements his country had concluded with Egypt, France, Tunisia and the United States. Furthermore, Guinea had consulted most States parties in West Africa about enhancing regional cooperation in the area of anti-corruption. In response to a question, the panellist from Belgium noted her country's belief that technical assistance should be cross-cutting, multifaceted and tailored to the request at hand. Belgium did a considerable amount of preparatory work to meet the needs identified as precisely as possible. Belgium did this for all forms of cooperation, and the panellist explained that similar bilateral assistance was being developed for other States that had approached her country.

42. The panellist from the Plurinational State of Bolivia noted his country's belief that the Mechanism was strengthening the implementation of the Convention globally. In his words, it was particularly important to breathe life into the letter of the Convention and translate the Convention into concrete action to prevent and combat corruption. As part of its reform efforts, the Plurinational State of Bolivia had introduced a system to spot-check asset declarations. Over the previous six years, asset declarations made by 531 current and former public officials had been checked. For the period 2016–2017, of the 90 declarations of current and former public officials checked, 18 had been accepted without further observations, while 66 public officials had provided justifications with regard to the observations that had been made concerning their declarations. In the remaining 6 declarations, indications had been found of possible criminal wrongdoing. These had been referred to the Office of the

Attorney General for further investigation and, potentially, prosecution. Given these results, the panellist noted the importance of strengthening asset declaration systems with spot checks. He also underscored that customs authorities, property and company registers, migration authorities and other agencies needed to share information efficiently so that asset declarations could be verified meaningfully and swiftly. In response to a question, the panellist explained that the declarations had been selected for review based on complaints, anomalies and other information received.

43. The panellist from Sri Lanka spoke of his country's technical assistance needs in relation to a so-called citizens' charter. This charter was the result of his Government's recognition that many public officials did not fully understand their role as public servants. To address this matter, all public institutions were to display clear, step-by-step explanations showing the public how to obtain services from the institution in question. This form of transparency would help to inform public officials about what was required from them, while at the same time preventing corruption. The next step would be to increase the availability of online services, thereby limiting the amount of direct contact between public servants and citizens and the number of opportunities for corruption. The panellist highlighted that, to fully implement these initiatives, Sri Lanka relied on technical assistance and expertise from abroad. The country had independently addressed a number of institutional and legislative challenges, but to make full implementation possible, public officials needed to be trained. Sri Lanka needed capacity-building, training and the sharing of good practices to equip its public officials with the technical experience and knowledge required to implement the new measures in practice. The panellist called on the international community to respond favourably to his country's requests for assistance.

44. The panellist from New Zealand made some general observations on the requirements of chapters II and V and what those might imply from a technical assistance perspective. He shared his country's recent experience in acting as a reviewing State party in a second cycle country review and emphasized that technical assistance should be specific, sustainable and equitable. To illustrate how this could work, the panellist discussed two examples of technical assistance New Zealand had given to countries in the Pacific region. The first example related to the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions and its strategic priority to enhance the organizational capacity of its member institutions, as well as the professional capability of their employees. The second example was the technical assistance New Zealand had provided to the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative, which was aimed at building fairer societies by supporting the courts in 14 Pacific island States to develop more accessible, just, efficient and responsive justice systems. The panellist ended his presentation by noting that the technical assistance rendered in these two examples had yielded very promising results.

45. The panellist from Brazil presented a conference room paper submitted by his Government on the provision of technical assistance by the G-20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.12). The Working Group had compiled input from its 20 member countries on good practices in the implementation of chapters III and IV that could be shared with other countries. The paper compared the various types of technical assistance that G-20 countries could provide to meet the needs formulated in the first cycle reviews. As co-chair of the Working Group, Brazil had used the data on technical assistance needs prepared by UNODC to identify the areas that offered the greatest potential for the provision of technical assistance. The panellist showed how the assistance that could be offered was compared with the assistance needs. Furthermore, the panellist explained that the G-20 Anti-Corruption the countries of the Working Group had agreed to post their individual responses to the technical assistance questionnaire online. Where States had agreed to that, their information had been posted on the UNODC website, in the section on the Convention, under their country profiles. It was hoped that this information would be helpful in channelling requests for technical assistance to those States that could offer

the expertise needed. During the panel discussion, a member of the secretariat used the questionnaire of Brazil to show what information had been made available online.

46. During the ensuing debate, several speakers underscored that technical assistance formed an integral part of the Convention, a feature that was unique to this Convention and to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. Several speakers emphasized that technical assistance was a key component of the Implementation Review Mechanism and stressed the value of the technical assistance efforts undertaken by UNODC and States. One speaker referred to the need to take into account the role and function of the Group as well as to examine its work, including limitations and difficulties encountered, with a view to identifying appropriate responses to the needs for technical assistance identified in the reviews. The availability of technical assistance was seen as a precondition for many States to implement the recommendations emanating from country reviews.

47. Some speakers referred to the delivery of their countries' technical assistance programmes, while others identified their needs for technical assistance. One speaker noted that their Government had already engaged bilaterally in order to fill gaps. Other speakers welcomed the technical assistance provided by UNODC, including on capacity-building.

48. Some speakers noted that, as a consequence of the requirements set by the Convention, the recommendations made by the reviewing governmental experts might exceed the capacities of the States parties under review. This was particularly the case for developing States. According to another speaker, the fact that a country had established certain institutions in line with the Convention did not automatically guarantee that those institutions had the technical capacity to fulfil their mandates. As an example, the speaker mentioned that cash-based societies encountered challenges in implementing the asset recovery and anti-money-laundering provisions of the Convention. Another speaker mentioned that the implementation of certain preventive measures, such as those relating to conflicts of interest and asset declarations, as well as those relating to judicial integrity and transparency, would not have been possible without the technical assistance his country had received. It was noted that technical assistance allowed for the effective implementation of the Convention and ensured the further evolution of the Mechanism.

49. The Secretary of the Conference concurred with the many speakers who had emphasized the importance of technical assistance. He referred to the specific provisions on technical assistance in the Convention. He reminded the Group that technical assistance had become inextricably linked with the Implementation Review Mechanism following the decision of the Conference of the States Parties to use the Mechanism, inter alia, to identify technical assistance needs. He also reiterated that UNODC was not the sole provider of technical assistance in the area of anti-corruption. Referring to the presentations and interventions, he stressed the importance of bilateral assistance and the work of other providers of technical assistance.

50. The Secretary reiterated that special importance should be attached to directing efforts towards the identification of technical assistance needs and acknowledged in particular the efforts undertaken by developing countries in the framework of the Mechanism, which proportionally represented a significantly greater investment than that made by developed countries. In that regard he reiterated that there was a need to respond to calls for technical assistance so as not to frustrate the expectations of developing countries created by such investments. He emphasized that technical assistance needs identified through the Mechanism were benchmarked and that it was possible to achieve tangible results by implementing the Convention in full. The Secretary noted that the Group was a forum for coordination among all relevant stakeholders and that additional efforts were needed to improve coordination and the exchange of information. The Secretary further referred to the reforms being undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and noted that UNODC would make efforts to ensure that the topics that continued to be discussed by the

Group would find their way into the development support architecture that would emerge from those reforms.

VI. Financial and budgetary matters

51. The secretariat provided an oral update on the extrabudgetary resources available and expenditures incurred for the operation of the first and second cycles of the Implementation Review Mechanism as at 31 July 2018, on projected expenditures for the completion of the first cycle, and on projected expenditures for the operation of the first four years of the second cycle.

52. The secretariat explained that the regular budget resources and expenditures for the Mechanism in the biennium 2018–2019 would be included in the next update on financial and budgetary matters for the Implementation Review Group at its second resumed ninth session. The secretariat empasized that, with the decision by the General Assembly to establish three additional regular budget posts, the regular budget costs had been capped and would not further increase.

53. The Secretary informed the Group that, as at 31 July 2018, the total extrabudgetary expenditures for the Mechanism amounted to $9,695,600 in support of the first cycle and $2,594,505 in support of the second cycle.

54. Expressing its appreciation, the secretariat informed the Group that the voluntary contributions and in-kind contributions received in support of the Mechanism so far totalled $14,935,600.

55. Drawing the Group's attention to the extrabudgetary funding gap, the secretariat pointed out that the voluntary contributions received so far fully covered the estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements of $10,119,300 for the completion of the first cycle, including anticipated expenditures. The estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements of $4,010,900 for the first two years of the second cycle were also fully covered. With regard to the estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements of $3,454,000 for the third and fourth years of the second cycle, the secretariat pointed out that the funding gap amounted to $2,648,600.

56. With reference to the note by the Secretariat on resources and expenditures for the functioning of the Mechanism (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/4), which had been submitted to the Group at its ninth session, in June 2018, the secretariat recalled that it had already reviewed and significantly lowered the projected resource requirements for the first four years of the second cycle and that the reduced estimates were based on the assumption that the cost-saving measures would continue to be applied. The secretariat concluded that it was of utmost importance that the Group continue to pursue its efforts to ensure adequate financing for the entire second cycle.

57. Several speakers expressed their appreciation for the secretariat's regular financial reporting, which contributed to the Mechanism's transparency.

58. Several speakers underscored the importance and positive impact of the Mechanism and the need to ensure both the successful completion of the second cycle and its sustainable financing, which they pointed out as a key condition for the smooth and effective operation of the Mechanism. They recalled that their countries had given financial support to the Mechanism in the past and continued to do so at present. They announced that they would continue to provide voluntary contributions to the Mechanism, while strongly encouraging other States parties to do the same. Ensuring the viability of the second review cycle was very important for the Mechanism as a whole, as well as for the Convention's effectiveness.

59. Some speakers stated their support for the current model of mixed funding, with parts of the support for and operation of the Mechanism funded from the regular *budget of the United Nations and other parts from voluntary contributions, in line* with resolution 3/1 of the Conference and the terms of reference of the Mechanism.

60. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the secretariat's efforts to reduce the costs of the Mechanism. As further cost-saving measures, some speakers suggested that the number of languages used in reviews be limited, on a voluntary basis, to two; that the information provided in the self-assessment checklists be limited to what was most essential and avoiding duplication; and that the States parties involved directly bear the cost of translating working documentation. Speakers pointed out that these voluntary cost-saving measures should not adversely affect the quality of the country reviews or undermine the principle of multilingualism.

61. One country proposed a reduction in the meeting entitlements used by the subsidiary bodies of the Conference and invited States parties to consider the value of having a second resumed session, suggesting that it might not be necessary to have one. The Secretary, while welcoming a review of the meeting schedule in preparation for the Conference at its next session, noted that only the Conference could make a decision on such a matter. He further noted that reductions in the entitlements for meetings of the subsidiary bodies would not result in savings that could be re-allocated to the Conference and its subsidiary bodies or to the Mechanism. He noted that the secretariat was considering whether to shorten the duration and agenda of the second resumed ninth session of the Group without prejudice to the Group's functions and work.

62. The Secretary acknowledged with gratitude the commitment of States to the Implementation Review Mechanism and the support they provided to operate it, including by providing financial and in-kind contributions. He noted that the secretariat continued to seek and implement cost-saving measures while being fully committed to the principle of multilingualism and to ensuring that reviews continued to be in-depth and of high quality.

VII. Other matters

63. Under this item, one speaker mentioned the scheduling of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference and referred to the draft set of non-binding recommendations and conclusions based on lessons learned regarding the implementation of chapters III and IV of the Convention during the first review cycle (CAC/COSP/2017/5) and the draft non-binding guidelines on the management of frozen, seized and confiscated assets (CAC/COSP/WG.2/2018/3), both of which the Group had considered at its regular session in June. The speaker also sought clarification regarding the agenda and the dates of the second resumed ninth session. In his response, the Secretary clarified that the resumed second ninth session, whose duration was under discussion, had been tentatively scheduled for the week of 12 November 2018 and that, because it was a resumed session, the agenda would remain the same.

64. A briefing for non-governmental organizations was held on 5 September 2018 on the margins of the Group's meeting, in line with Conference resolution 4/6. A summary of the briefing is to be made available in a conference room paper (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.11).

VIII. Adoption of the report

65. On 4 September 2018, the Implementation Review Group adopted the report on its first resumed ninth session (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.8, CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.9, CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.10 and CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.11), as orally amended.